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# Extended Scholarly Program Notes

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EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES

by

Ashly S. Thomas

B.A., Bethune-Cookman University, 2009

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Music.

Department of Music in the  
Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
December, 2014

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

EXTENDED PROGRAM NOTES

By

Ashly S. Thomas

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

in the field of Vocal Performance

Approved by:

Dr. Paul Transue

Dr. Eric McCluskey

Dr. David Dillard

Graduate School  
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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Ashly S. Thomas, for the Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance, presented on December 2011, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: Extended Program Notes

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Eric McCluskey

This document contains the extended program notes for the graduate vocal recital of Ms. Ashly S. Thomas which took place on March 31, 2011 at the Old Baptist Foundation recital hall on the campus of Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. These extended program notes include the repertoire list for the performance along with the translations of the pieces in foreign languages. The repertoire list includes standard opera arias from the Baroque period, Classical period, and the Romantic period. The list also includes German *lieder*, and French *mélodie* and *operetta* (*which was sung in English, hence no translation is included*). The document contains a biographical sketch of each composer and the compositional genesis of each piece. In addition, each piece's musical structure, as well as poetic significance is explained in detail with the use of many scholarly sources as well as examples taken directly from the scores.

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## CHAPTER 1

### GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL (1685 - 1759)

George Frederick Handel is credited with being one of the most prolific composers of the late Baroque Period. His opera *Giulio Cesare* (1724) was composed during his involvement with the Royal Academy of Music, an organization founded by a group of aristocrats who were in need of a constant supply of baroque singers.<sup>1</sup> Handel had been designated the orchestra master, and on top of recruiting new singers for the academy, he was also commissioned to compose new operas to Italian libretti. The libretto for *Giulio Cesare* was written by Nicola Francesco Haym (1678 - 1729) who, in addition to being a librettist, was a composer as well as a performer. Haym worked for the academy as a continuo cellist, and later took on the role of stage manager in 1722.

*Giulio Cesare* is an opera seria that is presented in three acts. The story takes place in 48 B.C. in Ancient Egypt. Caesar and Pompey the Great are locked in a bitter battle over who will reign as the ruler of Rome. Caesar has just traveled to Egypt in pursuit of his recently defeated adversary. Upon his arrival, Caesar is greeted by Pompey's wife, Cornelia, and her son Sesto. Cornelia begs Caesar to make peace with her husband, a plea which Caesar agrees to; however, not before Achillas, who is a commander of the Egyptian army, enters with the head of Pompey the Great. Upon seeing this, an enraged Caesar tells Achillas that he must meet with the king of Egypt, Tolomeo, who rules alongside his sister, Cleopatra. Achillas meets with Tolomeo and explains how the gift of Pompey's head was not received well. Tolomeo orders Achillas to kill Caesar, and in return he would have Cornelia (Pompey's widow), whom Tolomeo

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<sup>1</sup> The Harvard Dictionary of Music. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003. s.v. "Opera seria [It.]," [http://www.credoreference.com/entry/harvdictmusic/opera\\_seria\\_it](http://www.credoreference.com/entry/harvdictmusic/opera_seria_it) (accessed March 26, 2011).

himself secretly desires. Cleopatra, in an effort to seduce Caesar, disguises herself as a servant named “Lydia” and tries to convince Caesar to join with her in overthrowing her Tolomeo. *Giulio Cesare* is still considered to be one of Handel's most expressive scores both musically, and dramatically.

Cleopatra's aria, "V'adoro pupille" (*I adore your eyes*) appears in Act Two of the opera. Handel created an atmosphere of seduction as the high strings double the vocal line, while the low strings provide a basso continuo. To further Cleopatra's allure, Handel incorporated a band of onstage instruments, including: oboe, viola, viola da gamba, bassoons, harp, and cello. The *da capo* form of "V'adoro pupille" is traditional for arias from this era. The A section begins in F Major and is slow and stately, as Cleopatra describes how his eyes resemble arrows of love that pierce her heart. Handel composed melismatic sections that coincided with the seductive tone of the aria. The text from the A section is *V'adoro, pupille, saette d'amore, le vostre faville son grate nel sen*. Handel composed melismas at the end of this phrase, each time Cleopatra sings the word *sen*. *Sen* is an apocopated form of the Italian word *seno* meaning *breast*.

Figure 1.1A and B Melismatic word painting of ‘sen’



Donald Burrows points out the tonal scheme similarities between Caesar's "Hunting Aria" from Act One, and "V'adoro pupille." The difference between these two arias lies



in the B sections; Caesar's aria modulates from D Minor to A Minor, while Cleopatra's aria modulates from D minor to G Minor.<sup>2</sup> Cleopatra's vocal lines are expressive, and extremely legato. As with all Handelian arias, "V'adoro pupille" exudes lyricism and emotional freedom.<sup>3</sup>

It was generally understood that the embellishments of the return of the A section would not be written out for the singer which is the case in "V'adoro pupille." The performer's responsibility was to create embellishments and ornamentations that depicted the heightened emotion of the moment. The popularity of singers at the time depended heavily on their ability to sing florid passages, full of vocal pyrotechnics. Our knowledge of Baroque performance practice is vague, thus there is much debate over proper Baroque ornamentation. Today most students rely on their vocal teachers, coaches and recordings by Baroque specialists to give them ideas for ornamenting Baroque music. The lack of material evidence on Baroque singers' stylistic choices from that era leaves room for a wide degree of artistic interpretation.

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Burrows. *Handel (Master Musicians Series)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). 215.

<sup>3</sup> Noni Espina. *Repertoire for solo voice* (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, INC., 1977), 733.

George Frederick Handel

Librettist: Nicola Francesco Haym (1678 - 1729)

"V'adoro pupille"  
*from Giulio Cesare*

V'adoro, pupille,  
Saette d'amore,  
Le vostre faville  
Son grate nel sen,

Pietose vi brama  
Il mesto mio core  
Ch'ogn'ora vi chiama  
L'amato suo ben.

I adore you, eyes,  
Arrows of love,  
Your sparkles  
Are pleasing to my breast.

Have pity on  
My sad heart  
That every hour calls  
The lover your beloved.

Translation by Rebecca Burstein  
[http://www.aria-database.com/  
translations/cesare14a\\_vadoro.txt](http://www.aria-database.com/translations/cesare14a_vadoro.txt)

## CHAPTER 2

### GUSTAV MAHLER (1860 - 1911)

Gustav Mahler was born in Bohemia in the Habsburg's Empire. He had fourteen brothers and sisters in total; however, only six survived infancy, including Gustav. He worked his way around the world, conducting many different orchestras until finally ending his career with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra in 1907.<sup>4</sup>

Mahler was fond of publishing his *lieder* in groups rather than one at a time. By the time of his death in 1911 he had published six groups totaling forty-six pieces. His fifth group of published songs proved to be his most complex. There are a total of seven songs, five of which are clustered into a collection titled *Rückert Lieder*. The *Rückert Lieder* were named after the poet, Friedrich Rückert (1788 - 1866), whose texts are the only connecting theme. *Um Mitternacht*, *Ich bin der Welt*, *Ich atmet*, and *Blicke mir*, were composed and orchestrated by Mahler in 1901. *Liebst du um Schönheit*, however, was composed in 1902 for voice and piano as a gift for his wife, Alma. Mahler himself did not actually orchestrate *Liebst du um Schönheit*, instead Max Puttmann, an employee of Mahler's publisher, C.F. Kahnt, set the piece for voice and orchestra. The first four pieces officially premiered under the name *Rückert Lieder* in 1905, *Liebst du um Schönheit* followed two years later. After Mahler's death, the five *Rückert Lieder*, along with the last two *lieder* from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, were combined under the name *Sieben Lieder aus letzter Zeit*. These seven *lieder* were never intended to be a song cycle, which is clearly evident from the lack of linking material between these songs both musically, and textually. The lyrical texture of the German *lied* is exemplified in every

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Franklin. "Mahler, Gustav." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40696> (accessed March 23, 2011).

song, with the only exception being *Um Mitternacht*. Recital order of the *Rückert Lieder* is left solely to the discretion of the performer, as there are no documented guidelines of traditional performance practices.

*Liebst du um Schönheit* is the most intimate song of this collection, a conclusion that can be drawn when considering it as a love song for his wife, and the fact that this was the only piece of the five not orchestrated. Another feature that separates this piece from the others is symmetry. Each phrase is six bars long; the exception for this being the last phrase. The fact that Mahler stays true to the flow of the text has caused some of his critics to claim that this song is too elementary, and “less refined in technique as compared to the other Rückert-Lieder pieces.”<sup>5</sup> The vocal line is simple, yet expressive and passionate as it rises and falls in wave-like motion. The importance of the word *liebe* (love) is paramount to this song. Each phrase begins with a hypothetical reason for why someone might be in love. *Liebst du um Schönheit*, *Liebst du um Jugend*, and, *Liebst du um Schätze*, are followed by the declamation *Oh nicht mich liebe*. Here, love for beauty, youth, nor riches suffice as a good enough motivation to love at all.

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<sup>5</sup> Coburn Steven, Rückert Lieder, song collection for voice & piano (or orchestra), Internet, available from <http://www.allmusic.com/work/rckert-lieder-song-collection-for-voice--piano-or-orchestra-c49719/description>, accessed 4 April 2011.

Figure 2.1 *Liebst du um Schönheit.*Figure 2.2 *Liebst du um Jugend.*Figure 2.3 *Liebst du um Schätze.*

The final phrase, *Liebst du um Liebe*, begins with the same motivic material as the previous phrases however, the melody is adjusted. The beginning of the phrase begins on A flat while the beginning of every other phrase before this begins on B flat. The word *liebe* is sung with much more sweetness and delicacy as the text exclaims, *Oh ja, mich liebe!* This is the first instance of any emphasis for the word *liebe*. The *crescendo*, *diminuendo* marking(s) above the vocal line encourages the singer to allow the intensity to grow while holding the high A Flat. The *p* dynamic marking creates a charming, rather than superficial, appeal of love. *Liebe*, love, is truly for love at this moment in the piece. The sweet, delicateness of love for love is expressed beautifully in the final phrase of this piece.

Figure 2.4 *Liebst du um liebe*

Gustav Mahler

Text by: Friedrich Rückert (1788 - 1866)

*Liebst du um Schönheit*

Liebst du um Schönheit,  
O nicht mich liebe!  
Liebe die Sonne,  
Sie trägt ein gold'nes Haar!

Liebst du um Jugend,  
O nicht mich liebe!  
Liebe den Frühling,  
Der jung ist jedes Jahr!

Liebst du um Schätze,  
O nicht mich liebe.  
Liebe die Meerfrau,  
Die hat viel Perlen klar.

Liebst du um Liebe,  
O ja, mich liebe!  
Liebe mich immer,  
Dich lieb' ich immerdar!

*If you love for beauty*

If you love for beauty,  
Oh, do not love me!  
Love the sun,  
She has golden hair!

If you love for youth,  
Oh, do not love me!  
Love the spring;  
It is young every year!

If you love for treasure,  
Oh, do not love me!  
Love the mermaid;  
She has many clear pearls!

If you love for love,  
Oh yes, do love me!  
Love me ever,  
I'll love you ever more!

Translation by: David Kenneth Smith.  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=14094](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=14094)

## CHAPTER 3

### HUGO WOLF (1860 - 1903)

Born in Windischgrätz, Slovenia in 1860, Hugo Wolf's childhood was very similar to that of W.A. Mozart. Wolf came from a family of musicians, and at the tender age of four, the young child prodigy began taking piano and violin lessons with his father. If Wolf paralleled Mozart with his musical genius, his less than stellar academic standing was inspired by Gustav Mahler. Wolf's struggle with his formal education would get him thrown out of at least three schools after which he attended the Vienna Conservatory, against the wishes of his father. While he had a fond appreciation for the styles of composers of the Classical Period, he had a special interest for the "avant-garde" harmonies of the emerging late Romantic Period. Wolf created a personal style that combined the gentle melodic structure of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven with the obfuscated, challenging harmonies of Richard Wagner, Jean Sibelius, and Bedřich Smetna.<sup>6</sup> While Wolf may have composed works from different genres including choral works and chamber music, he is most famous for his German *lieder*.

*In dem Schatten meiner Locken (In the Shadow of my Curls)*, is found in the collection entitled: *Spanisches Liederbuch* (1891) which translates simply as *Spanish Songbook*. There are forty-four *lieder* within the collection and it is divided into two groups: spiritual (*Geistliche Lieder*); and secular (*Weltliche Lieder*). Wolf's harmonic texture for this song and that of the entire collection is inspired by the flavorful music and culture of Spain, which had captured his interest.<sup>7</sup> *In dem Schatten meiner Locken* is a

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<sup>6</sup>Eric Sams and Susan Youens. "Wolf, Hugo." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52073> (accessed March 14, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Frank Walker, *Hugo Wolf A Biography* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951), 254-257.

secular piece that tells the story of a young girl remarking on her beloved, who rests in the shadow of her hair. The text employs metaphor and sexual innuendo in particular the last phrase: "*Und er nennt mich seine Schlange!*" (*He calls me his serpent!*). Considering the Biblical connotations of that specific animal, one could deduce the meaning in a loving and affectionate way to be: "He calls me his little devil!" Wolf utilizes several key changes that help color the story. The song begins in B-flat as the persona sets up the scene speaking of her sleeping lover. In the fourth measure, (see Figure 3.1) Wolf uses an unresolved cadence to create a musical question mark. The text echoes the question with: *Weck ich ihn nun auf?* (*Should I wake him?*)

Figure 3.1 Question chords.

The musical score for Figure 3.1 consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat major). It begins with the lyrics "ein. gone." and then "Weck ich ihn nun auf? -". The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats. It begins with the lyrics "I'll not wake thee, love, -". The tempo is marked "a tempo" and the dynamics are "pp" (pianissimo) and "sempre ppp" (sempre pianissimissimo). The score shows a key change from B-flat major to G major in the fourth measure, indicated by a sharp sign for the key signature.

As Wolf shifts from B-flat Major to a new key G Major, the piano seems to ponder the question. Figure 3.2 shows that the decision is made as the key changes yet again to G-flat Major as she replies: "*Ach nein.*"



Figure 3.2 Answer chords.

The musical score is for a short piece in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics "Ach nein!" and "sleep on!". The piano accompaniment features a continuous eighth-note and sixteenth-note motive in the right hand, and a simpler accompaniment in the left hand. The piece ends with a piano (p) marking and a fermata.

Wolf's accompaniment consists of an eighth-note and sixteenth-note motive that is used in the entire piece in almost every measure. This motivic material resembles the giddy laughter of a young girl who is in love.

Hugo Wolf

Text by: Anonymous

*In dem Schatten meiner Locken*

*In the shadow of my curls*

In dem Schatten meiner Locken  
Schlief mir mein Geliebter ein.  
Weck ich ihn nun auf? - Ach nein!

In the shadow of my curls  
My beloved has fallen asleep.  
Shall I awaken him now? Ah, no!

Sorglich strahlt ich meine krausen  
Locken täglich in der Frühe;  
Doch umsonst ist meine Mühe,  
Weil die Winde sie zerzausen.  
Lockenschatten,  
Windessausen,  
Schlieferten den Liebsten ein.  
Weck ich ihn nun auf? - Ach nein!

Carefully I comb my ruffled  
Locks, early every day;  
Yet for nothing is my trouble,  
For the wind makes them disheveled again.  
The shadows of my tresses,  
The whispering of the wind,  
Have lulled my Darling to sleep.  
Shall I awaken him now? - Ah, no!

Hören muß ich, wie ihn gräme,  
Daß er schmachtet schon so lange,  
Daß ihm Leben geb' und nehme  
Diese meine braune Wange,  
Und er nennt mich eine Schlange,  
Und doch schlief er bei mir ein.  
Weck ich ihn nun auf? - Ach nein!

I must listen to him complain  
That he pines for me so long,  
That life is given and taken away from him  
By this, my brown cheek,  
And he calls me a serpent;  
Yet he fell asleep by me.  
Shall I awaken him now? - Ah, no!

Translation by: Paul Heyse  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=8015](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=8015)

Wolf's *Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte* comes from a collection of songs with texts exclusively by the poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832). The collection, compiled in 1890, is entitled: *Goethe-Lieder*. *Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte* is specifically from the *Suleika* collection. Goethe wrote the *Suleika* collection as a symbol of love and friendship to his third wife Marianne von Wellerman (1784 - 1860).<sup>8</sup> *Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte* is quite short in length and ends with an unanswered question, “*Was bedeutet dieser Traum?*”(What do these dreams mean?). The story describes the loss of a ring on a trip down the Euphrates River as well as the mysterious dreams that

<sup>8</sup> Frank Walker, *Hugo Wolf A Biography* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951), 254.

follow that event. Wolf wrote the song in 12/8 meter, which coupled with the lyrical and flowing piano accompaniment establishes a feeling of the Euphrates River's moving water. The song is marked at the beginning with the tempo: *Sanft fließend*, (*Gently flowing*), and *zart und ausdrucksvoll*, (*softly and expressively*). The piano accompaniment has a feeling of rocking back and forth in a succession of eighth-notes that move in a continuous cycle of broken chords shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Broken, water chords.



Hugo Wolf

*Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte*

Als ich auf dem Euphrat schiffte,  
Streifte sich der goldne Ring  
Finger ab, in Wasserklüfte,  
Den ich jüngst von dir empfang.

Also träumt ich. Morgenröte  
Blitzt' ins Auge durch den Baum;  
Sag, Poete, sag, Prophet!  
Was bedeutet dieser Traum?

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832)

*When I was sailing on the Euphrates*

When I was sailing on the Euphrates,  
The golden ring slid off  
My finger into the watery abyss,  
The ring that I received from you recently.

Thus I dreamed. The red dawn  
Blazed into my eyes through the trees;  
Tell me, poet, tell me, prophet!  
What does this dream mean?

Translation by: Emily Ezust

[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=6388](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=6388)

## CHAPTER 4

### FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828)

With roughly 600 *lieder*, Franz Schubert posthumously became one of the most successful composers of the early Romantic Period. Born in Himmelpfortgrund, Vienna to a family of Moravian peasants, his father, Franz Theodore, was a successful teacher who built his own school in the town of Lichtental. Living and working in Vienna enabled Schubert to become saturated with the music of the “Viennese School” which included Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. Schubert’s musical compositions encompass many different genres including: liturgical pieces, symphonies, piano music, as well as chamber music. He is, however, arguably most well-known for his *lieder*.

During his life, Schubert did not know real fame or economic stability. For the greater part of his adult life he received financial as well as moral support from his close friends. They would hold concerts in their homes as a place for Schubert to showcase his compositions.<sup>9</sup> Schubert died in 1828 at the young age of thirty-one and was buried next to one of his idols, Ludwig van Beethoven, as per his request prior to death.

*Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams)*, published in 1825, is one of Schubert’s most well-known works for voice and piano. The text of the song is a poem by Matthäus von Collin (1779 - 1824). Schubert marks the beginning of the song *sehr langsam (very slowly)* in an effort to ensure that a somber, reverent mood is conducted throughout. The text describes the subdued holiness of the night and the gentleness of dreams. These two elements together help create the image of the moonlight's peaceful journey through

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<sup>9</sup> Robert Winter, et al. "Schubert, Franz." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/25109pg1> (accessed March 29, 2011).

space. The journey terminates in the hearts of men who long for the peace of night before dawn awakens. The dynamic range of the song is soft with markings that stipulate not to exceed pianissimo. The extremely soft dynamics help capture the still, tranquil essence of the night.

Figure 4.1 shows the key change to G major from B Major just before the text: *Die belauschen sie mit Lust* (*They listen with delight*). This shift in tonality doubles as a shift in mood as if going from night to day.

Figure 4.1 From dusk till dawn.



Tonal shifts such as this one are a common feature of Schubert *lied*.<sup>10</sup> The accompaniment features a continuous set of sixteenth-notes cycling through broken chords for the duration of the song. The slow, gentle undulation in the accompaniment compliments the delicate nature of the voice. With its allusion to the mysterious nature of dreams and the emphasis of the night, the song expresses feelings one associates with the Romantic Era. German composer Max Reger was so impressed by this piece that he arranged it for voice and orchestra.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Rufus E. Hallmark. *German lied in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996), 40.

<sup>11</sup> John Reed. *The Schubert Song Companion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 339.

Franz Schubert

*Nacht und Träume*

Heil'ge Nacht, du sinkest nieder;  
Nieder wallen auch die Träume  
Wie dein Mondlicht durch die Räume,  
Durch die Menschen, stille, stille Brust.  
Die belauschen sie mit Lust;  
Rufen wenn der Tag erwacht:  
Kehre wieder, heil'ge Nacht!  
Holde Träume, kehret wieder!

Matthäus von Collin (1779-1824)

*Night and Dreams*

Holy night, you sink down;  
Dreams, too, drift down  
Like your moonlight through space,  
Through the quiet hearts of men;  
They listen with delight  
Calling out when day awakens:  
Return holy night!  
Fair dreams, return!

Translation by: David Gordon,

[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=3956](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=3956)

## CHAPTER 5

### CARL MARIA VON WEBER (1786 - 1826)

Carl Maria von Weber was one of the most influential composers of the Romantic Period. His music proved inspirational for many great composers including: Franz Liszt, Frédéric Chopin, and Claude Debussy. Born in Eutin, Holstein, Germany, Weber came from a musical family. His father, Franz Anton Weber, was an accomplished violinist, and in 1787 he opened his own theatre company. The performers for the company were comprised mostly of his own family members.<sup>12</sup>

Composed in 1821, *Der Freischütz* is a three act *Singspiel* based on a German folk tale with a libretto by Friedrich Kind (1768 - 1843). The setting for the story is a Bohemian forest in which a marksmanship contest is taking place between Max, a young gamekeeper, and Killian, a wealthy peasant. The two men are competing for the position of head gamekeeper, a position that is currently occupied by Cuno, the father of Agatha, who is the love interest of Max. Max loses the competition, and Killian is proclaimed to be the king of the marksmen. After falling into a depression, Max is befriended by Kaspar, another gamekeeper, who persuades him to cast seven magic bullets for the next day of the competition.

Agatha's cavatina *Und ob die Wolke* (*And whether the cloud*), appears in Act Three as she prays for peace after a nightmare. Weber models this aria after the religious *chorale* - a hymn sung by congregations in church services. The form can be expressed as AABA. In the beginning A sections, Agatha explains how God rules in heaven and looks down on all of creation. The warm delicate sound of the even eighth-notes in the

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<sup>12</sup>Philipp Spitta, et al. "Weber." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40313pg9> (accessed March 03, 2011).

accompaniment provides comfort to a hellish nightmare. The B section transitions to a more personal declaration as her prayer becomes more self-reflective. Within the B section Weber also temporarily uses the minor mode as Agatha contemplates the possibility of her own death (see Figure 5.1). The aria closes in the original key of A Flat major as Agatha affirms her religious convictions that she is in God's hands.

Figure 5.1 Death key

traut, und wär' dies auch mein letz - ter Morgen, rief mich sein Va-terwort als Braut:

Dm: i/v ii ii i vii VI iv VI

Carl Maria von Weber  
 "Und ob die Wolke"  
*from Der Freischütz*

Und ob die Wolke sie verhülle,  
 Die Sonne bleibt am Himmelszelt;  
 Es waltet dort ein heil'ger Wille,  
 Nicht blindem Zufall dient die  
 Welt! Das Auge, ewig rein und klar,  
 Nimmt aller Wesen liebend wahr!  
 Für mich auch wird der Vater sorgen,  
 Dem kindlich Herz und Sinn vertraut,  
 Und wär' dies auch mein letzter Morgen,  
 Rief' mich sein Vaterwort als Braut:  
 Sein Auge, ewig rein und klar,  
 Nimmt meiner auch mit Liebe wahr!

Friedrich Kind (1768 - 1843)

Even when clouds hide it,  
 The sun still shines in the tent of heaven;  
 One holy will rules there;  
 No blind chance governs the world!  
 That eye, eternally pure and clear,  
 Looks lovingly after all creation!  
 Our Father will care for me too,  
 With my childlike heart and trusting mind,  
 Even if this were my last morning,  
 If his paternal word would call for me, a bride:  
 His eye, forever pure and clear  
 Looks upon me too with love!

Translation by: Anonymous  
<http://www.classicalkaraoke.com>



## CHAPTER 6

### WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756 - 1791)

Mozart was born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756. His compositions encompass all genres of music including chamber music, symphony, and opera. One of Mozart's most memorable operas is *Le nozze di Figaro* (*The Marriage of Figaro*). The librettist for the opera was Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749 - 1838), an Italian librettist who is most recognized for his collaborations with Mozart including two additional famous Mozart operas, *Così fan tutte*, and *Don Giovanni*. He was appointed the poet of the court theater in 1783 by Joseph II.<sup>13</sup>

Composed in 1786, *Le nozze di Figaro* is an opera buffa in four acts, based on the play *La folle journée, ou le Mariage de Figaro*, (1784) written by the French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais (1732 - 1799). At a time when revolutions were happening in prominent countries throughout Europe as well as the newly independent America, the Beaumarchais play was deemed too scandalous, and it was subsequently banned by Emperor Joseph II in Vienna where Mozart lived. When Mozart proposed the idea for the

opera to Emperor Joseph II he was originally denied.<sup>14</sup> However, Mozart convinced the emperor and his court that his opera was not at all threatening, and eventually the emperor allowed his work to be performed.

The opera is set in Spain at the estate of Count Almaviva, who is married to Countess Rosina Almaviva. The Count's valet, Figaro, is to be married to Susanna, who

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<sup>13</sup> Tim Carter and Dorothea Link. "Da Ponte, Lorenzo." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07207> (accessed April 2, 2011).

<sup>14</sup> Cliff Eisen, et al. "Mozart." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40258pg3> (accessed March 06, 2011).

is the maid to the Countess. The Count has given his blessing for Figaro's marriage on one stipulation. The stipulation is the return of the *droit du seigneur*, (*right of the lord*), an archaic practice that allows the nobleman, or lord of the land, to be the first to sleep with the virgin women under his employment on the night of their wedding. A practice that the Count had banned previously in the opera but later regretted doing when he wanted to bed Susanna. The Countess, having heard all of the rumors of her husband's philandering ways from other servants on the estate, is devastated. She truly loves her husband, and will do anything to get him back -- even if that means conspiring with the hired help to publicly embarrass him. Figaro's plan is to have Susanna write the Count a flirtatious letter telling him to meet her in the garden. Assuming that the Count agrees, the next stage of the plan is to have young Cherubino, dressed up like Susanna, replace her and publicly expose the Count as the adulterer that he is. Before they can execute their plan however, the Count, followed by a trio of conspirators - Basilio, Dr. Bartolo, and Marcellina - burst in, and claim that Figaro could not possibly marry Susanna because he has already signed a contract to marry Marcellina. Devastated and extremely confused, the Countess, along with Susanna, must now come up with a new plan.

The beginning of the aria *Dove sono... I bei momenti?* is sorrowful and slow as the Countess questions, "Where are the beautiful moments?" The bass clef accompaniment beats one and two, while the treble clef accompaniment stresses the off beats. When played simultaneously with the vocal line, this creates a "dragging," heavy sound which accents the wearisome mood.

Figure 6.1 Heavyhearted



The music shifts from sad and woeful, to lively and more upbeat in the second section of the aria at the marked tempo change to *Allegro* as the Countess boldly prepares herself for the task ahead. Her courage, determination and energy can be felt through the intensity of the music as she rouses herself out of depression. According to Martial Singher and Eta Singher, the Countess has not yet given up hope that her own faithfulness and love will restore peace and harmony to the life of the castle.<sup>15</sup> The Countess wills herself out of depression in the *Allegro* section and expresses her new found optimism.

<sup>15</sup> Martial Singher, Eta Singher, *An Interpretive Guide to Operatic Arias* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, (1983), 158.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

"Dove sono"

*from Le Nozze di Figaro*

E Susanna non vien!  
 Sono ansiosa di saper  
 Come il Conte accolse la proposta.  
 Alquanto ardito il progetto mi par,  
 E ad uno sposo sì vivace e geloso!  
 Ma che mal c'è?  
 Cangiano i miei vestiti con quelli  
 Di Susanna,  
 E suoi co'miei  
 Al favor della notte.  
 Oh, cielo! a qual umil stato fatale  
 Io son ridotta da un consorte crudele! 3  
 Che dopo avermi con un misto inaudito  
 D'infedeltà, di gelosia, di sdegno!  
 Prima amata, indi offesa,  
 Alfin tradita  
 Fammi or cercar da una mia  
 Serva aita  
 Dove sono i bei momenti  
 Di dolcezza e di piacer?  
 Dove andaro i giuramenti  
 Di quel labbro menzogner?  
 Perché mai, se in pianti e in pene  
 Per me tutto si cangiò,  
 La memoria di quel bene  
 Dal mio sen non trapassò?  
 Ah! se almen la mia costanza,  
 Nel languire amando ognor,  
 Mi portasse una speranza  
 Di cangiar l'ingrato cor!

Libretto by: Lorenzo Da Ponte (1749 - 1838)

And Susanna hasn't come!  
 I am anxious to find out  
 How the Count responded to the proposal.  
 I must admit, that our project is bold,  
 And with a husband, so impulsive and so jealous!  
 But what's the harm?  
 I only want to meet him in the dress  
 Of Susanna,  
 While she wears mine.  
 In the favor of darkness.  
 Oh Heavens! To what shameful state of existence  
 Have I descended at the fault of my husband!  
 Who, after he had me, gave me an unheard mixture  
 Of infidelity, jealousy, and rage  
 First beloved, then insulted  
 And at last betrayed!  
 Forced me to plead now for my  
 Maid's assistance  
 Where are the lovely moments  
 Of sweetness and pleasure?  
 Where have the promises gone  
 That came from those lying lips?  
 Why, if all is changed for me  
 Into tears and pain,  
 Has the memory of that goodness  
 Not vanished from my breast?  
 Ah! if only, at least, my faithfulness,  
 Which still loves amidst its suffering,  
 Could bring me the hope  
 Of changing that ungrateful heart!

Translation by: Jane Bishop

[http://www.aria-database.com/translations/nozze19\\_dove.txt](http://www.aria-database.com/translations/nozze19_dove.txt)

## CHAPTER 7

## GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845 - 1924)

Gabriel Fauré is known throughout the classical world as one of the masters of the French *mélodie*, the French variation of the Italian art song and the German *lied*. Born in Pamiers, Ariège, Fauré found a love for music at a young age. His father sent him to the *Ecole de Musique Classique et Religieuse* in Paris when he turned nine, in hopes that his son would use the training he learned to become a choirmaster. Most of his education centered on music of the Church; he spent his time learning about chant, polyphony, and organ music. Fauré stayed a total of eleven years at this institution. Through this school he was introduced to the composer Camille Saint-Saëns.<sup>16</sup>

*En priere (In Prayer)* is a song for solo voice and piano. The text was written by Stéphan Bordèse and is Bordèse's interpretation of the prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane just before he was taken to be tortured and crucified. In this song, Jesus is praying to God for strength, and courage in the face of death. In the opening bars Jesus says, "*Si la voix d'un enfant peut monter jusqu'à Vous, O mon Père, Ecoutez de Jésus, devant Vous à genoux, La prière*" (*If the voice of a child can reach You, o my Father, Listen to the prayer of Jesus*). Jesus is asking God, as well as reassuring himself, that if the voice of a child can reach heaven, then his should as well. This song is a somber, reverent plea as Jesus prepares for what is yet to come. The triple subdivision in the accompaniment vs. the duple subdivision in the voice, as pointed out by Robert Gartside, is illustrated in Figure 7.1.<sup>17</sup> This rhythmic conflict symbolizes the

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Michel Nectoux. "Fauré, Gabriel." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09366> (accessed March 15, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Robert Gartside. *Interpreting the songs of Gabriel Fauré* (New York: Leyerle Publications, 1996), 156.

internal conflict between Jesus' human nature, and the nature of his Divinity and purpose on earth.

Figure 7.1 Triple vs. Duple subdivision.



The song has a quiet, unworried, calm sound that is unobtrusive, and humble. The accompaniment creates a buoyant feeling by circling the dominant with arpeggiated tonic chords. The tonic of the chords creates a pedal tone in the left hand.<sup>18</sup> The sequences in the vocal line float above the accompaniment ever so precariously.

Fauré loved mood pieces with a touch of sentiment delicately - even mysteriously handled.<sup>19</sup> The beauty of this song lies in the soft, slow, contained melody that adds a dreamlike texture to this piece.

<sup>18</sup> Barbara Meister, *Nineteenth Century French Song* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980). 89-90.

<sup>19</sup> James Husst Hall, *The Art Song* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), 148.

Gabriel Fauré

*En priere*

Si la voix d'un enfant peut monter  
 Jusqu'à Vous, ô mon Père,  
 Écoutez de Jésus,  
 Devant Vous à genoux, la prière!  
 Si Vous m'avez choisi pour enseigner  
 Vos lois sur la terre,  
 Je saurai Vous servir, auguste  
 Roi des Rois, ô Lumière!  
 Sur mes lèvres, Seigneur, mettez la  
 Vérité salutaire,  
 Pour que celui qui doute, avec  
 Humilité Vous révère!  
 Ne m'abandonnez pas, donnez-moi la  
 Douceur nécessaire,  
 Pour apaiser les maux, soulager la  
 Douleur, La misère!  
 Révèlez Vous à moi, Seigneur en qui je  
 Crois et j'espère:  
 Pour Vous je veux souffrir et mourir sur  
 La Croix, au calvaire!

Text by: Stéphan Bordèse (1847 - ?)

*In Prayer*

If the voice of a child can reach  
 You, o my Father,  
 Listen to the prayer of Jesus,  
 On his knees before You!  
 If You have chosen me to teach  
 Your laws on earth,  
 I will know how to serve You, noble  
 King of Kings, o Light!  
 On my lips, Lord, place the  
 Salutory truth,  
 In order that he who doubts should with  
 Humility revere You!  
 Do not abandon me, give me the  
 Necessary gentleness,  
 To ease suffering, to relieve  
 Sorrow, the misery!  
 Reveal Yourself to me, Lord, in whom I  
 Believe and hope:  
 For You I wish to suffer and to die on  
 The Cross, at Calvary!

Translation by: David K. Smythe  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=2883](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=2883)

## CHAPTER 8

### CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862 - 1918)

Claude - Achille Debussy, born in Saint – Germain – en - Laye in 1862 during the Franco-Prussian War, would become one of the most prolific composers of his time. His father, Manuel - Achille, a French marine, had hoped his young son would follow in his militaristic footsteps.<sup>20</sup>

Known for his experimental tendencies, Debussy developed a style that encompassed the essence of the *Impressionistic Movement*. Impressionism began as a movement of the visual arts in nineteenth-century France. The main goal of the Impressionistic movement, according to the Martin Gayford was to, “convey the visual effects of actual reflected light on natural outdoor subjects.” This idea was translated in music when composers created impressions and moods through rich and varied harmonies and tones.<sup>21</sup> Impressionistic elements can be found throughout Debussy’s music in the form of pentatonic scales, whole-tone scales, and the use of modes other than major or minor. These features helped Debussy create the atmospheric and indirect orchestration that is described as Impressionism.

Debussy’s chromatic harmonies challenge standard conceptions of Classical music. Debussy explored many different genres of music including symphonic, chamber music, piano works, as well as opera. He achieved success in just about all of these genres with the exception of opera. He was never satisfied with his operatic compositions. The end of his operatic composing career occurred after the failure of his

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<sup>20</sup> François Lesure and Roy Howat. "Debussy, Claude." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07353> (accessed 06 March 2011).

<sup>21</sup> Martin Gayford “Impressionism,” *Credo Reference*, Internet, available from <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/penguineng/impressionism>, (accessed 12 May 2011).



opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1902.

Debussy's tumultuous love life influenced his music. When he was eighteen, he had a scandalous affair with Madame Blanche Vasnier. Madame Vasnier was Debussy's first benefactor as well as a soprano. Many of the songs composed during this time were written specifically for Madame Vasnier's voice, including *Claire de lune*, *Fantoches*, and *Apparition*.

*Claire de lune*, not to be confused with his other compositions of the same name, is a setting of the poetry of Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896). Madame Vasnier's husband, unbeknownst of young Debussy's affair with his wife, introduced him to Verlaine. Paul Verlaine was a nineteenth-century poet whose poetry is classified to be *Symbolist* in nature. Symbolism was the literary equivalent to Impressionism in which text was used to express lurid, decadent, and moral themes. According to the *Bloomsbury Guide to Art* by Shearer West, "Symbolism began as a literary movement that developed from Romanticism in France in the second half of the 19th century, taking its themes of decadence, dandyism and mysticism from the novels of J.K. Huysmans."<sup>22</sup>

The text of this piece is a description of one's soul. The person being described in this piece has a joyous soul with a sad undertone. The text talks about the calm moonlight that shines down on the merrymaking of the dancers in their masks. The muted colors, coupled with the soft dynamics, add a gentle touch to the song. Debussy remarked that "the pedals of the piano should be depressed even before the music is played as a way to allow the overtones to vibrate immediately."<sup>23</sup> He added, "The left-hand arpeggios should be fluid, mellow, drowned in pedal, as if played by a harp on background

<sup>22</sup> Shearer West *The Bloomsbury Guide to Art* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Ltd, 1996.) "Symbolism," <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/bga/symbolism> (accessed May 15, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Roger Nichols *Debussy Remembered* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1992), 18. 159.

strings.”<sup>24</sup>

Figure 8.1 displays the phrase, “*Tout en chantenet sur le mode mineur*” (Even while singing in a minor key). The text in this section describes singing in the minor key; however, Debussy ironically modulates to a major key.

Figure 8.1 *Mode mineur*.



<sup>24</sup> Roger Nichols, *The Life of Debussy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 160.

Claude Debussy

Text by: Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896)

*Clair de lune*

Votre âme est un paysage choisi  
Que vont charmant masques et  
Bergamasques,  
Jouant du luth et dansant, et quasi  
Tristes sous leurs déguisements fantasques!

Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur,  
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune.  
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur  
Bonheur,  
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de lune,

Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,  
Qui fait rêver, les oiseaux dans les arbres,  
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,  
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes  
Parmi les marbres!

*Calm Moonlight*

Your soul is a chosen landscape  
Charmed by masquers and  
Revellers  
Playing the lute and dancing, and almost  
Sad beneath their fanciful disguises!

Even while singing in the minor key,  
Of victorious love and fortunate living.  
They do not seem to believe in their  
Happiness,  
And their song mingles with the moonlight,

The calm moonlight, sad and beautiful,  
Which sets the birds in the trees dreaming,  
And makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,  
The tall slender fountains  
Among the marble statues!

Translation by: Peter.Low  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=16243)  
TextId=16243

*Fantoches* is a comical, upbeat song that paints the picture of many stock characters from eighteenth-century traveling Italian folk theater known as the *Commedia dell'Arte*. The song places *Scaramouche* and *Pulcinella* in a somewhat compromising position in the forest. Meanwhile, a doctor from Bologna is picking herbs, to be later used for medicine, completely unaware that his young daughter has set off half-naked in search of her lover, who happens to be a Spanish pirate. Figure 8.2 shows how the interjected, "*La, la, la, la...*" interrupts the story. The "*La, la, la, la...*" motive resembles laughter at the hilarity of these precarious situations.

Figure 8.2 *La La La* motive.

Claude Debussy

Text by: Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896)

*Fantoches**Puppets*

Scaramouche et Pulcinella,  
Qu'un mauvais dessein rassembla,  
Gesticulent, noirs sous la lune,

Scaramouche et Pulcinella,  
Brought together by some evil scheme,  
Gesticulate, black beneath the moon,

Ce pendant l'excellent docteur Bolonais  
Cueille avec lenteur des simples  
Parmi l'herbe brune.

Meanwhile, the learned doctor  
From Bologna slowly gathers  
Medicinal herbs in the brown grass.

Lors sa fille, piquant minois,  
Sous la charmille, en tapinois,  
Se glisse demi-nue,

Then his sassy-faced daughter  
Sneaks underneath the arbor  
Half-naked, in quest

En quête de son beau pirate espagnol,  
Dont un amoureux  
Rossignol clame la détresse à tue-tête.

Of her handsome Spanish pirate,  
Whose distress a languorous  
Nightingale deafeningly proclaims.

Translation by: Laura Claycomb  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?TextId=16263TextId=16263](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=16263TextId=16263)

*Apparition*, the last piece in this set, is about the mystery of love. This song seeks to capture the essence of the beauty of the first kiss by describing how the seraphim wept in the sad moonlight that shone down on the dew on the blue corollas. This song embodies the value of true love with intense chromatic passages in the accompaniment are characteristic of Debussy. Figure 8.3 depicts the eighth-notes in the accompaniment followed by a two-octave arpeggio that that represents the "snow" of the last phrase,

"Neiger de blancs bouquets," (A snow of white bouquets.)

Figure 8.3 White bouquets of snow

50

*p*

*sim.*

*pp*

*sf [p]*

mé - es Nei - ger de blancs bou - quets

The musical score is for a piece titled "Neiger de blancs bouquets," which translates to "A snow of white bouquets." The score is on page 50 and is in 3/4 time. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, and then a half note B4. The piano accompaniment consists of a series of chords, each followed by a quarter rest. The chords are in the right hand, and the left hand plays a simple bass line. The score includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano) for the vocal line, *sim.* (simile) for the piano accompaniment, *pp* (pianissimo) for the piano accompaniment, and *sf [p]* (sforzando [piano]) for the piano accompaniment. The lyrics are "mé - es Nei - ger de blancs bou - quets".

Claude Debussy

Text by: Stéphane Mallarmé (1842 - 1898)

*Apparition*

La lune s'attristait.  
 Des séraphins en pleurs  
 Rêvant, l'archet aux doigts, dans le  
 Calme des fleurs vaporeuses,  
 Tiraient de mourantes violes  
 De blancs sanglots glissant sur l'azur  
 Des corolles.  
 C'était le jour béni  
 De ton premier baiser.  
 Ma songerie aimant à me martyriser  
 S'enivrait savamment du  
 Parfum de tristesse  
 Que même sans regret et  
 Sans déboire laisse  
 La cueillaison d'un rêve au  
 Coeur qui l'a cueilli. J'errais  
 donc, l'oeil rivé sur Le pavé  
 vieilli  
 Quand avec du soleil aux cheveux,  
 Dans la rue et dans le soir,  
 Tu m'es en riant apparue  
 Et j'ai cru voir la fée au  
 Chapeau de clarté  
 Qui jadis sur mes beaux sommeils  
 D'enfant gâté  
 Passait, laissant toujours  
 De ses mains mal fermées  
 Neiger de blancs bouquets  
 D'étoiles parfumées.

*Apparition*

The moon was saddened.  
 Seraphims in tears  
 Dreaming, bows at their fingers, in the  
 Calm of filmy flowers  
 Threw dying violas  
 Of white sobs sliding over the blue  
 Of corollas.  
 It was the blessed day  
 Of your first kiss;  
 My reverie, loving to torture me,  
 Wisely imbibed its  
 Perfume of sadness  
 That even without regret and  
 Without setback  
 Leaves the gathering of a dream within  
 The heart that gathered it.  
 I wandered then, my eye riveted on  
 The aged cobblestones.  
 When, with light in your hair,  
 In the street and in the evening,  
 You appeared to me smiling  
 And I thought I had seen the fairy with  
 A hat of light  
 Who passed in my sweet dreams as a  
 Spoiled child,  
 Always dropping from her carelessly  
 Closed hand  
 A snow of white bouquets  
 Of perfumed stars.

Translation by: Laura Claycomb,  
[http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get\\_text.html?](http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/get_text.html?TextId=32317)  
 TextId=32317

## CHAPTER 9

## GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858 - 1924)

Born in Lucca, Tuscany into a prominent musical family, Giacomo Puccini's name was already well-known even before he was born. He was fifteen years old when he began studying at the *Istituto Musicale Pacini* under his uncle. His musical abilities so impressed everyone around him that he was sent for additional study to a conservatory in Milan in 1880. While there, Puccini would be introduced to influential composers who would inadvertently lay the foundations for his own composition style. People such as Antonio Bazzini, and Amilcare Ponchielli, established composers at the time, introduced him to the basic concepts of Wagnerian artistry.<sup>25</sup>

*La bohème* is an opera in four acts that is based on the collection of stories titled, *Scènes de la vie de bohème* by Henry Murger (1822 - 1861). This opera follows the lives of six young bohemians living in poverty in the Latin Quarter in Paris. The romance between Rodolfo and Mimi is complicated by the fact that she suffers from tuberculosis. This disease meant almost certain death. She sets her sights on Rodolfo, the poet who lives in the same building as she does. They are introduced to one another in act one when Mimi goes to Rodolfo's apartment and asks him to re-light her candle which has blown out. The two are instantly attracted to one another, and Rodolfo tells Mimi about his life in his aria *Che gelida manina* (*What a cold little hand*). Mimi's response to his introduction is *Mi chiamano Mimi* (*I am called Mimi*). In this aria she explains that she is known by the nickname Mimi, however, her real name is Lucia.

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<sup>25</sup>Gabriella Biagi Ravenni and Michele Girardi. "Puccini." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40280pg1> (accessed March 20, 2011)

The slow tempo of the beginning expresses her timid, shy, and coy disposition. Mimi continuously repeats herself during the beginning section of the aria as if she is unsure what to say next. The "*Mimi motif*," a melodic phrase that occurs several times during the opera when referring to Mimi, is illustrated in Figure 9.1

Figure 9.1 Mimi motif



The Mimi motif occurs three times in the aria and is more a reminiscence motif than a leitmotif since it does not develop or change within the orchestral fabric.

*Mi chiamano Mimi* is resplendent with tempo changes that accentuate Mimi's apprehensive attitude. The aria has a lyric, legato sound until the end where she snaps back to reality, and explains in speech-like style that her life is not as exciting as that of a poet and that she is just a girl who lives in the same building as Rodolfo.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup>Gabriella Biagi Ravenni and Michele Girardi. "Puccini." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40280pg1> (accessed March 20, 2011).



Giacomo Puccini  
 "Mi chiamano Mimi"  
*from La Bohème*

Sì. Mi chiamano Mimì,  
 Ma il mio nome è Lucia.  
 La storia mia è breve.  
 A tela o a seta  
 Ricamo in casa e fuori  
 Son tranquilla e lieta  
 Ed è mio svago  
 Far gigli e rose.  
 Mi piaccion quelle cose  
 Che han sì dolce malia,  
 Che parlano d'amor, di primavera,  
 Che parlano di sogni e di chimere,  
 Quelle cose che han nome poesia...  
 Lei m'intende?  
 Mi chiamano Mimì,  
 Il perchè non so.  
 Sola, mi fo il pranzo da me stessa.  
 Non vado sempre a messa,  
 Ma prego assai il Signore.  
 Vivo sola, soletta  
 Là in una bianca cameretta:  
 Guardo sui tetti e in cielo;  
 Ma quando vien lo sgelo  
 Il primo sole è mio  
 Il primo bacio dell'aprile è mio!  
 Il primo sole è mio!  
 Germoglia in un vaso una rosa...  
 Foglia a foglia la spiol!  
 Così gentile il profumo d'un fiore!  
 Ma i fior ch'io faccio, ahimè!  
 I fior ch'io faccio, ahimè!  
 Non hanno odore.  
 Altro di me non le saprei narrare.  
 Sono la sua vicina che la vien  
 Fuori d'ora a importunate.

Libretto by: Luigi Illica (1857 - 1919)

Yes, they call me Mimi,  
 But my name is Lucia.  
 My history is brief.  
 To linen or to silk  
 I embroider at home or outside  
 I am contented and happy  
 And it is my pastime  
 To make lilies and roses.  
 I like these things  
 That have such sweet enchantment,  
 That speak of love, of springtime,  
 That speak of dreams and of visions,  
 Those things that are called poetic...  
 Do you understand me?  
 They call me Mimi,  
 And why I don't know.  
 Alone, I make lunch for myself.  
 I do not always go to mass,  
 But I pray a lot to the Lord.  
 I live alone, quite alone  
 There is a little white room:  
 I look upon the roofs and the sky;  
 But when the thaw comes  
 The first sunshine is mine  
 The first kiss of April is mine!  
 The first sunshine is mine!  
 A rose opens in a vase...  
 Petal by petal I watch it!  
 That gentle perfume of a flower!  
 But the flowers that I make, alas!  
 The flowers that I make, alas!  
 They have no odor!  
 About me I know nothing else to tell.  
 I am your neighbor who comes  
 To bother you at the wrong moment.

Translated by: Terri Eickel  
[http://www.aria-database.com/translations/boheme2\\_simi.txt](http://www.aria-database.com/translations/boheme2_simi.txt)

## CHAPTER 10

### GEORGE GERSHWIN (1898 - 1937)

George Gershwin was an American composer and pianist who shot to stardom in 1924 with his score *Rhapsody in Blue* for piano and orchestra.<sup>27</sup> This was an innovative synthesis of the sophisticated style of the symphony, and the newer musical genre of *jazz*, which until then had been shunned by classical musicians for being primitive and unrefined. Gershwin never lost his love for the theater or for new projects. He and his brother Ira began work on *Porgy and Bess* (1935). Two years later, in 1937, George, who had been experiencing symptoms of an unknown brain tumor, fell into a coma and died after an ill-fated emergency surgery. The musical world mourned the loss of one of their greatest composers.

*Porgy and Bess* is based on the novel *Porgy* by DuBose Heyward (1885 - 1940), a white author. The story centers on the lives of poor African-Americans living in a fictional town called *Catfish Row*, in Charleston, South Carolina. The opera is named after the two main characters, Porgy, a crippled beggar, and Bess, a beautiful, troubled woman. Bess struggles with morality issues as she tries to reject her former lover Crown and his life of drugs and violence. She is captivated with her new love Porgy who despite being crippled is willing to devote his entire life to her and treat her with respect and kindness - something she has never experienced from men in her past. Their passionate duet *Bess You is my Woman Now* appears in the second act as the rest of the cast prepares for a church picnic on the fictitious neighboring island of Kittiwah. Porgy is unable to attend due to his infirmity, yet he urges Bess to go on without him. She instead chooses to stay behind, and Porgy believes that it is because she feels sorry for him and his inability to do the same things as someone without a disability. Porgy begins the duet by reassuring Bess that she is his woman but that she mustn't stop enjoying her life because of him.

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<sup>27</sup> William G. Hyland *George Gershwin* (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 58.

He states, "... *and you must laugh and sing and dance for two instead of one.*" Porgy's indefatigable strength is evident from his positive outlook on life. Porgy suffers from an undetermined medical condition, however, his spirit is strong and determined. He explains that his happiness will come through seeing her happy and enjoying life. He lets her know that whatever her old life entailed is now in the past, and they are going to move on and live happily together. Bess responds by restating the fact that she is indeed Porgy's woman, yet she declares, "...*and I ain't never going nowhere, 'les you shares de fun.*" She begins to tell Porgy that she doesn't need to go anywhere to enjoy herself. She has found all the love and joy she needs right in his arms, and unless he is with her, she cannot experience happiness. They both share a passionate embrace and declare that the vows they make to one another are true and strong.

Although not the first opera to be written involving the lives of African-Americans, the issues covered by *Porgy and Bess* have been controversial since the piece was composed. First, the entire cast is made up solely of classically trained African-American musicians, which seemed unheard of at the time of composition. Second, the opera confronts controversial issues like drug use, violence, murder, and poverty within the black community. *Porgy and Bess* did not become part of standard opera repertoire until 1976, when the Houston Grand Opera performance of the entire score brought the work out of the shadows. Gershwin initially wanted this piece to be known as a *Folk Opera* due to the racy subject matter coupled with the fact that, until this point, Gershwin had not composed a full opera.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Richard Crawford, et al. "Gershwin, George." Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/47026> (accessed March 21, 2011).

## CHAPTER 11

## JACQUES OFFENBACH (1819 - 1880)

Jacques (originally Jacob until he changed it when he went to study in Paris) Offenbach was born in Cologne, Germany in 1819. The Offenbach's were of German-Jewish descent. During the beginning of his career Jacques mainly supported himself by playing the cello in various orchestras in France.

Offenbach worked almost exclusively composing operetta and is known internationally as one of the originators of the art form, composing over ninety operettas, most of which are still performed today.<sup>29</sup> Operetta is a nineteenth-century form of opera that spawned from the *singspiel* in Germany with Johann Strauss (1825 - 1899), and the *opéra-comique* in France with Offenbach. Opera in France, and Paris in particular, was in a transformative state during this time. The three main opera houses in Paris (*the Opéra*, *the Opéra-Comique*, and *the Theatre-Italien*) produced very different genres of opera. The *Opéra* was known for producing crowd-pleasing *French Grand Opera* which included large chorus scenes, societal struggles, and the ideals that ignited the French Revolution. The *Theatre-Italien* produced Italian opera exclusively. Lastly, the *Opéra-Comique* was in charge of producing lighter, simpler opera compositions including *Opéra-lyrique* and *Opéra-comique* that featured spoken dialogue instead of recitative. However, as time went on, the subject matter of these operas became more serious and intense, mimicking *French Grand Opera*, and there was a need for lighter, more simple opera compositions. Operetta, as defined by The Harper Dictionary of Opera and

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew Lamb. "Offenbach, Jacques." In Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20271> (accessed March 25, 2011).

Operetta, is "a musical stage work in lighter operatic style, usually of comic nature." "Operetta is unique as there is no clear, definitive definition of this sub-genre of opera".<sup>30</sup>

One such work is *La Perichole*, which was composed in 1868. Offenbach had two librettists for this operetta; Ludovic Halévy (1802 - 1883), and Henri Meilhac (1831 - 1897). Ludovic Halévy and Henri Meilhac were playwrights and opera librettists from Paris whose collaborations are considered to be the pinnacle of French opera. According to the Harper Dictionary of Opera and Operetta, both are considered to be "outstanding satirist." Halévy and Meilhac are known to have also worked together with opera composer Georges Bizet for his opéra comique *Carmen* in 1875.

*La Perichole* is a story of two Peruvian lovers, Paquillo, and La Perichole, who make a meager living as street performers. The story centers on the fact that they are too poor to afford a marriage license.<sup>31</sup> Paquillo leaves in search of money while La Perichole sleeps away her hunger pains. The Viceroy of Peru, Don Andrès de Ribeira, upon seeing the sleeping La Perichole, is instantly smitten by her beauty. Once she awakens and realizes that Paquillo is not there, the Viceroy offers her a position as his new Lady in Waiting at the court. She reluctantly accepts this offer and writes a farewell letter to her beloved Paquillo. Since all the Ladies in Waiting must be married, the Viceroy orders the Mayor of Lima, Don Pedro de Hinoyasa, and the First Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, Don Miguel de Panatellas to search for a husband for the newly appointed Perichole. They stumble upon a depressed Paquillo who is in the process of hanging himself after reading the letter from his dear Perichole. After several drinks, Hinoyasa and Panatellas talk an inebriated Paquillo into marrying the Viceroy's new love interest. Paquillo has no idea that the new Lady in Waiting is his lover La Perichole.

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<sup>30</sup> James Anderson *The Harper Dictionary of Opera and Operetta* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1989), 258, 370, 420.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander Faris *Jacques Offenbach* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980), 160.

“*The Topsy Waltz*” occurs in Act Two of this three-act operetta in the midst of the wedding celebration. La Perichole enters the scene completely intoxicated and unaware that her new husband-to-be is her beloved Paquillo. She is so impressed by the opulence of the court that she can’t help but remark on how well she has eaten, and how great the wine is. She stumbles and staggers about stating, “*I might be a little tight, but oh not a soul must know.*” Figure 11.1 illustrates the light texture of the voice and orchestra. The singer carries the melody, while the orchestra simply punctuates the waltz theme.

Figure 11.1 Waltz theme.

The image shows a musical score for a waltz theme. The top staff is for the vocal part, labeled "LA PERICHOLE". The lyrics are: "I've dined so well, I feel di-vine. Oh, what an ex-tra-or-di-na-ry". The bottom staves show the orchestral accompaniment, including Flute I (Fl. I), Oboe I (Ob. I), String pizzicato (p Str. pizz.), and Violoncello/Bass pizzicato (Vc., B. pizz.). The tempo is marked "Andantino". The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4.

*La Perichole* was originally written in French; however, due to the comical nature of the subject matter, operetta is generally done in the vernacular language of wherever it is being performed. This silly, comical aria captures the essence of the nature of the operetta.

## Chapter 12

### Conclusion

The musical selections described in this document were chosen specifically for a graduate recital performed on March 31, 2011 held in the Recital Hall of the Old Baptist Foundation on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Several criteria were used in selecting each song, such as the beauty of the poetry, finding contrasting modes of musical expression as well as friendly advice from School of Music faculty. The arias were placed between the groups of German and French art songs to add variety to the recital. The repertoire for the recital represents multiple musical genres including Baroque, Classical and Romantic. The goal for the recital was to perform each song with musical integrity, and to share a love of music with the audience. The recital was performed in partial fulfillment for a Masters of Music in Vocal Performance from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

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